

PRAYER TIMINGS

FAJR 04.47 am
SUNRISE 06.05 am
DUHR 11.48 am
ASR 03.04 pm
MAGHRIB 05.33 pm
ISHA 07.03 pm

WEATHER TODAY

18°C Minimum
27°C Maximum

Misty at places at first becomes moderate temperature daytime, relatively cold by night.

AL RUWAIHS 15° + 23°
AL KHOR 15° + 27°
DUKHAN 15° + 24°
WAKRAH 12° + 28°
MESAYEED 12° + 28°
ABUSAMRA 16° + 24°

HIGH TIDE 06:44 - 18:29
LOW TIDE 1:13 - 14:34

Oral health can save people from severe COVID-19 complications: QU research

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This study was led by Qatar Hamad Dental Center and Qatar University, collaborating with McGill University in Canada and the Complutense University in Spain. The team included researchers from Qatar University (Dr. Daud), a graduate student from McGill University (W. Cai), and doctors and staff from Hamad Medical Corporation, such as dental specialists, ICU specialists, and computer engineers.

"We also had the privilege to count with two world-renowned researchers in periodontology and epidemiology, like Dr. Mariano Sanz (Spain) and Dr. Belinda Nisalakul McGill University, Canada," added Dr. Faleh.

Shedding light on the link between periodontitis and COVID-19 complications, Dr. Faleh said, "There are several ways in which periodontitis could be making coronavirus worse. One possibility is that the bacteria in the mouth could make their way to the lungs and complicate things. Another possibility is that patients with gum diseases have ongoing inflammation in the body that makes their immune system more prone to react in a destructive way to COVID-19."

The good news is that it is easy to prevent and manage periodontal disease. People need to implement proper oral hygiene after every meal and use dental floss to clean between the teeth. Dentist visits 2 to 3 times per year to check up on oral health, professional cleaning of the teeth is necessary. "Having a chronic infection in your mouth is not good for your health. It has been known for some time that periodontitis can have detrimental effects on many systemic diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, atherosclerosis, cancer, pneumonia, Alzheimer's, diabetes, to mention a few," he added. Researchers in Qatar investigated 568 patients who suffered from COVID-19 and found that a significant portion of patients, who suffered severe complications, including death, had an advanced stage of gum disease.

Activities of exercise for National Service Academy cadets begin

QNA — Doha

The activities of an exercise carried out by the National Service Academy cadets kicked off recently under the patronage and in the presence of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs H.E. Dr. Khalid bin Mohammed Al Attiyah.

The exercise, which will continue until February 23, focuses on managing night operations and the methods of their implementation, as it is divided into two phases. The first phase is the night ground operations in which training on

the planned attack is carried out in the day and night. It also includes training on reconnaissance patrols, ambush patrol and attack training for engagement. As for the second phase of the exercise, it is focusing on defending islands, and these operations and training are also carried out during the night and day periods. In order to raise the combat competence of the Qatar Armed Forces.

The exercise also enhances the ability to respond to day or night attacks, and provides training on how to create engineering obstacles and establish the necessary fortifications.



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs H.E. Dr. Khalid bin Mohammed Al Attiyah with officials of National Service Academy.

New study reveals genetic influence on cancer immune responsiveness

THE PENINSULA — Doha

Dr. Davide Bedognetti, Director of the Cancer Research Department at Sidra Medicine and Adjunct Associate Professor at the College of Health and Life Sciences at HBKU, with Dr. Elad Ziv, Professor of Medicine at UCSF, led the research team as co-senior authors

Sidra Medicine and Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI) at Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), Qatar Foundation, led a research study with the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) that represents a significant step toward personalised cancer immunotherapy approaches.

The international team of cancer immunologists, computational scientists, oncologists, biologists, and geneticists found that pre-existing anti-cancer immunity depends heavily on a patient's genetic background. As such, certain genetic variants that make each of us unique can also influence the way the immune system fights tumors.

Immunotherapy, a therapeutic approach to boosting the immune system, has changed the way cancer is treated, yet only a minority of patients respond to the treatment.

Dr. Davide Bedognetti, Director of the Cancer Research Department at Sidra Medicine and Adjunct Associate Professor at the College of Health and Life Sciences at HBKU, with Dr. Elad Ziv, Professor of

Medicine at UCSF, led the research team as co-senior authors. QCRI's Dr. Mohamed Saad and UCSF's Dr. Rosalyn Sayaman, co-first authors, were the lead computational scientists, with other team members from Sidra Medicine including Dr. Wouter Hendricks Jessica Roelands, Dr. Younes Mokrab and Najeeb Syed. The immunogenomic analytic approach used in the study to dissect tumour-host interplay was also implemented as a part of one Qatar National Research Fund's National Priorities Research Program project.

The new joint research holds significant potential for further achievements. Future studies will determine whether a combined "immunogenetic score" can detect patients more likely to benefit from specific immunotherapies, for a truly personalised approach.

Having identified several variants in genes of which the immunological functions are not known, the team is hopeful that studying these genes in detail might lead to the identification of novel therapeutic targets.

Dr. Bedognetti said, "We already know that the risk of developing certain diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure, for instance, is influenced by our own DNA, and our research indicates that this is also the case for anti-cancer immune response."

"Translating these findings into clinical practice to develop personalised immunotherapeutic approaches accounting for patients' genetic fingerprints represents the next challenge. We are now characterising paediatric cancer patients genetically and immunologically to expand immunotherapy to this population."

"We are still at the beginning of this exciting program, and we

remain hopeful of the outcome that will ultimately benefit more and more patients affected by this devastating disease."

Commenting on how the study has highlighted the role of computational analysis in tackling major diseases, Dr. Saad said, "Advances in next-generation sequencing technologies, coupled with the rapid progress of computer hardware and software, enabled the generation and analysis of many types of biological data at a large scale. In this study, we analysed a set of around 9,000 patients with 30 different cancer types."

"Considering the complexity of the interaction between cancer cells and the immune system, and the large amounts of data needed to capture them, the role of computers has become more and more important in analysing the data that leads to understanding the biological mechanism behind cancer and response to immunotherapy. As the amount and type of data will grow exponentially due to technological advances, machine learning and artificial intelligence methods will be needed to understand them and extract clinically relevant information."

Bhavan's Public School lauded for high score in global exam

THE PENINSULA — Doha

Bhavan's Public School received special appreciations from the Private Education Affairs of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education for attaining above the global average score (500 points) in Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS 2019).

The school procured this perfect score for adopting the effective teaching and learning methods in science and mathematics domains. The achievement added yet another laurel to the school. The Ministry conveyed its deepest greetings to the big efforts taken by the teachers and staff for encouraging students to achieve this prestigious acclaim.

Principal of Bhavan's Public School, M.P. Philip, along with the Director Board Members of the school shared their delight and gratitude with the whole staff and students.

Doha Chapter of ICAI conducts annual general meeting

THE PENINSULA — Doha

The Doha Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) recently organised a seminar on 'Union Budget 2021', which was followed by annual general meeting (AGM) on February 14.

The event was organised on virtual platform and was well attended by over 150 attendees, comprising chapter members who are eminent finance professionals from the leading organisations and students.

Ambassador of India to Qatar, H.E. Dr. Deepak Mittal attended the event. The Ambassadors described the Union Budget 2021 as the path-breaking budget, paving the way to make a self-reliant India. He also termed the budget as visionary and progressive, with a view to rejuvenate and ramp up infrastructure development as a slew of big-ticket projects were announced.

The keynote speaker of the event was CA TN Manoharan, former president of ICAI who briefed the audience about the economic scenario due to COVID-19 pandemic and how the union budget aspires to keep Indian economy back on



Ambassador of India to Qatar, Dr. Deepak Mittal, and other participants during a virtual seminar on 'Union Budget 2021'.

the growth trajectory, while also allocating massive \$50n on COVID-19 vaccination.

He mentioned the proposal of Development Finance Institution (DFI) and Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC) as the visionary steps in the banking and financial service sector reforms.

Manoharan also explained the budget proposals in the Education, Information Technology & Agriculture sectors.

The AGM was conducted to transact the several important businesses, and for adoption of the accounts and election of the new management committee. The election was conducted by CA

Rukkatya Pachisa, former chairman of the chapter. The newly elected management committee comprises CA Nileep Bhatt - Chairperson; CA Ankit Agarwal - Vice Chairman; CA Vignesh Kalyanaraman - Secretary; CA Kamlesh Thiruvai - Treasurer and CA Kishore Alex, CA Arun Somanath, CA Dewakindand Thiruvai and CA Rakesh Bahety as committee members. CA Rukkatya welcomed the new Management Committee and also appreciated the selfless contribution of immediate past chairperson CA Sandeep Chowdhary and the outgoing committee.

The Chapter Chairperson CA Nileep Bhatt in his acceptance speech spelt out his vision for the chapter. He re-emphasised the importance of the strategic steps and gave brief outline of the future events, activities and initiatives. He lauded the contribution of the former chairpersons in the last four decades which has ensured unparalleled growth of the chapter. In his passionate speech, he motivated the members to keep themselves constantly updated about latest trends and reskill themselves in view of ever-changing dynamic global scenario.

QRCS provides food, nonfood aid for 27,000 Ethiopian refugees in Sudan

THE PENINSULA — Doha

The representation office of Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) in Sudan has completed phase 1 of an emergency response to the recent influx of Ethiopian refugees from the war-ravaged Tigray Region of Ethiopia.

Food and nonfood aid was distributed to thousands of refugees facing severe conditions at the Turaydah refugee camp, Gadarif State. The distributions included 2,300 food parcels, each containing 44kg of food items like flour, rice, lentils, tea, salt, and vegetable oil, as well as 2,000 hygiene kits. In total, these

provisions were received by 4,500 refugee families, or an average of 27,000 beneficiaries.

These were part of phase 1 of the project, which involves multiple sectors, at a total cost of QR6,681,818. It is planned to distribute another 1,000 food parcels, to be shipped from Qatar later this month, sending the overall number of food parcels to 3,500.

Over the coming period, phase 2 will be initiated, which will include 2,300 relief kits (kitchenware, blankets, soap, jerry cans, water storage containers, tarpaulins, and washing powder).

Customs thwarts attempt to smuggle narcotic pills

THE PENINSULA — Doha

The Air Cargo and Private Airports Department thwarted smuggling of several captagon narcotic pills, the General Authority of Customs (GAC) said in a statement.

An employee of the Postal Consignments section (Express Mail Customs) suspected the contents of a medicine box shipment, and after search 50 captagon pills were found hidden in the box inside the parcel. Accordingly, a record of customs seizure was drawn up, and the pills were delivered to the concerned authorities.

These seizures by the Air Cargo and Private Airports



Department came through the employees' diligence and show



Qatar customs' ability to protect its borders.